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ABSTRACT

The National Parent Involvement Summit brought together representatives from 28 organizations, associations and businesses, including educators, advocates, policymakers, and business leaders. The mission of the Summit was to obtain or renew a strong commitment to family involvement; generate visibility for its mission; strengthen efforts to meet the needs of families of diverse backgrounds; support legislation and policies that include parent and family involvement; and continue communication and collaboration among participants. Small and large group consensus-building activities sought to identify how parents and families should be involved in the educational process as children's first and ongoing teachers, as advocates for their children and themselves within schools; as advocates for schools within the larger community; as partners in school governance and decision-making; and as resources for schools. Summit participants also reached agreement on specific ways in which organizations, businesses, schools, homes, and government could facilitate family involvement in education. The participants also agreed on the goals and strategies needed to carry out the mission of the Summit. A list of Summit participants is included in this report. (AC)

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The National PTA

Message FROM A SUMMIT SPONSOR

Through all of the talk about education reform, one truth seems self-evident: while parent involvement alone can't fix all that's wrong with our schools, none of the other solutions is likely to work without the active participation of parents.

We thank the National PTA for recognizing that truth, and for rallying a broad array of organizations around it at the National Parent Involvement Summit in April 1992.

Scholastic is proud to have been one of the 28 businesses, advocacy groups and education organizations that convened for this historic summit, and we are pleased to be able to help spread the word through publication of this report.

As a publisher of educational materials, Scholastic relies on the help of parents and teachers to distribute our materials to children—so we're keenly aware of the importance of good communication between parents and schools. Scholastic shares the belief of many that the connection between families and schools is vital to the future of our children and our nation.

The recommendations of the National Parent Involvement Summit suggest many good places to start in strengthening that connection. Now it's up to all of us to provide the energy and commitment needed to make parent/family involvement a reality in our own schools.

RICHARD ROBINSON
CEO, Scholastic Inc.

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Mission Statement

DEVELOPED BY CONSENSUS OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE NATIONAL PARENT INVOLVEMENT SUMMIT

Our vision for the education of America's children and youth includes parent/family involvement. This involvement is essential for the positive emotional and social development, cultural growth and academic achievement of every child. As the nation focuses on educational excellence, parent/family involvement must be aggressively pursued and supported by homes, schools, communities, businesses, organizations and government entities by working together in a mutually collaborative effort. Therefore, it is the intention of the participants of the National Parent Involvement Summit to advance and ensure the highest levels of parent/family involvement through our respective organizations.

To achieve this mission, we will:

- **Obtain or renew a strong commitment** to parent/family involvement through our respective organizational goals, policies and activities.
- **Generate visibility for the mission** and facilitate implementation among Summit group participants' constituencies and the general public.
- **Strengthen efforts** to assure that parent/family involvement meets the needs of families of diverse backgrounds.
- **Seek legislation** and the development of policies that include parent/family involvement.
- **Continue communication** and collaboration among Summit participant groups and other key groups as identified.

For specific recommended strategies, see page 11.

Overview

The National Parent Involvement Summit was convened by the National PTA on April 6-8, 1992, at the Johnson Foundation's Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, Wisconsin. This report summarizes the outcomes of this historic Summit.

THE CHALLENGE It is well documented that when parents are involved in the education of their children, the children do better in school. National surveys and reports continue to underscore the importance of parent/family involvement in education. Despite this, the commitment to parent/family involvement is not reflected as strongly as it should be by parents, educators, business and the community. While national organizations speak out in favor of parent/family involvement, barriers continue to exist at the local school levels. Steps must be taken to develop a strong commitment to parent/family involvement among all sectors of the community. To facilitate this, the National Parent Involvement Summit called upon educators, child advocates and the business community to come together in an effort to make parent/family involvement in the education of children a top priority.

The Participants

The National Parent Involvement Summit brought together at the Wingspread Conference Center representatives from 28 organizations, associations and businesses, ranging from the National Black Child Development Institute to IBM, from the National School Boards Association to the National Committee for Citizens in Education. Participants included educators, advocates, policymakers and business leaders committed to increasing parent/family involvement in education from their own bases of expertise.

Sponsors

The National Parent Involvement Summit was sponsored by the National PTA and the Johnson Foundation, with support from IBM Corporation and Macmillan/McGraw-Hill School Publishing Company, and from Scholastic Inc., which prepared this report.

Summit Format and Methodology

Through the Delphi (Nominal) Review Group Technique, the Summit utilized small group and large group consensus-building for identifying (1) how parents and families should be involved in the educational process, (2) what organizations, businesses, schools, homes and government should do to facilitate parent/family involvement in education, and (3) the goals and strategies needed to carry out the mission of the National Parent Involvement Summit.

The Mission Statement was generated in the large group by identifying key words and phrases related to involving parents and families in the educational process. The final Mission Statement, goals and strategies were reviewed, discussed, and agreed upon during large group interaction.

A Word About "Parent" And "Family"

The National PTA and the participants in the National Parent Involvement Summit are sensitive to the many changes that the American family has undergone in the past half-century in particular. Therefore, the words "parent" and "family" as used in this report are intended to have the broadest possible meanings, including all the many different shapes, sizes and configurations of primary caregiving units to which our children belong.

Many

FOR PARENTS

How should parents/families be involved in the educational process? Summit participants identified the following roles that parents and families can play to improve education for their own children and all children.

Children's First and Ongoing Teachers

- Vital links, not simply as additions to the educational process.
- Effective parents even before their children are born.
- Providers of a home environment to encourage and motivate the student to learn and achieve.
- Supporting partners in home-based part of education.
- Role models of important ethics and values, including the value of education.
- Role models for active and experiential learning.

Roles

/ FAMILIES

Advocates for Their Children and Themselves Within Schools

- Active participants in the learning process.
- Loving critics of the school.
- Strong advocates and monitors setting high expectations for success.
- Resources for ways to better serve all children.
- Voices for commitment to quality education while being persistent that every child has an equal education opportunity.
- Persistent advocates for their own and their children's needs in the face of racial, cultural and language barriers to participation.

Advocates for Schools in the Larger Community

- Advocates for continued community and state support to provide the resources needed for school improvement.
- Advocates for all children and liaisons with other parents, community and non-parent taxpayers.
- Voices for commitment to quality education while being persistent that every child has an equal education opportunity.
- Advocates for and supporters of teachers and schools.
- Advocates for linking of services.

- Participants in the legislative process and voters for genuine education leaders.

Partners in School Governance & Decision-Making

- Responsible, along with other partners, for obtaining schoolwide objectives.
- Constantly and systematically involved planners, advisers, learners and evaluators.
- Equal partners in goal-setting for instruction and discipline.
- Decision-makers in the what, how and who of the educational process (school restructuring teams, liaisons for government action and policy, shared decision-making with school boards, curriculum, budget).
- Partners in working with schools to improve communication at all levels.
- Collaborators with school board to maintain quality school environment.

Resources for Schools

- Communicators in exchange of information between families and schools.
- Resources for ways to better serve all children.

"All of our children need all of us. And in time, all of us will depend on these children."

...

Pat Henry,
President, National PTA

...

- Supporters of schools.
- Links between home and school through continued involvement in activities inside and outside of the school day.
- Partners in working with schools to improve communication at all levels.

Making Way

FOR PARENTS, FAMILIES

What should organizations, businesses, schools, homes and government do to facilitate parent/family involvement in education? Summit participants identified the steps, beginning on the next page, that each set of "stakeholders" could take to bring parents and families into the educational process.

All Stakeholders Should:

- Initiate an aggressive campaign to raise public awareness of and promote meaningful parent involvement in student learning (e.g., through a national ad campaign, national parent involvement agenda).
- Develop policies to facilitate parent involvement and make it a priority.
- Demonstrate respect for the language, culture and diversity of all families in the community.
- Develop outreach strategies for parent/family involvement.
- Provide information, resources, support and training for parents, educators and the community to break down the racial, cultural and class barriers to meaningful parent/family involvement.
- Provide training for parent/family involvement.

Organizations Should:

- Provide training for educators on a variety of mechanisms for parent/family involvement.

"In reality, parent involvement still remains on the sidelines in most schools and districts."

...

Don Davies,
President,
Institute for Responsive Education

...

- Develop a clear platform statement in support of parent/family involvement.
- Lobby and testify on behalf of home/school/community collaboration.
- Educate the public and other stakeholders on the research, practice, resources and evaluation of parent involvement programs—what parent involvement programs really work.
- Develop and promote policies

about new and changing roles of parents, families and communities.

- Develop materials for parent/family involvement.

Businesses Should:

- Provide/facilitate training for employees, school, parents and community leaders regarding people and resources.
- Provide seed money for developing models.
- Provide release time for employees to be involved in education.
- Recognize and alleviate institutional barriers to parent involvement.
- Support early childhood education programs.
- Create policies and a work environment conducive to family involvement in education (e.g., flexible leave policies).

parents for effective parent involvement.

- Provide pre-service and in-service training for educators on a variety of mechanisms for parent/family involvement.
- Develop recognition programs for parents and their roles in learning by involving businesses, parent organizations, government, etc.
- Convene local parent involvement summits to establish action plans.
- As districts, write policies which cause administrators, teachers, businesses and the community to enter into partnerships with families.
- Provide training programs for teachers, school personnel, parents and the community that address racial, class and linguistic differences and help the school provide for parents from diverse backgrounds.
- Ensure, through the work of administrators and school personnel, a positive school climate that is family-friendly.

Schools Should:

- Recognize and alleviate institutional barriers to parent/family involvement.
- Reach out to orient and train

Homes Should:

- Organize and participate in parent support groups.
- Link with school in designing

parent/family involvement models.

- Provide and foster an environment that supports learning (for example: reading more than watching TV; eating together; using appropriate educational materials).
- Recognize that the home is a learning environment.
- Respond to and participate in opportunities provided by other stakeholders.
- Support and strengthen PTAs.
- Schedule time for school participation.

"Homes, schools and communities represent a largely untapped resource for improving our schools and increasing the success of all learners."

...

David L. Williams, Vice President, Resources for School Improvement, Southwest Educational Development Laboratory

...

Government Should:

- Recognize and alleviate institutional barriers to parent/family involvement.
- Provide full funding for quality education (for example, fund Elementary and Secondary Education Act in line with other categorical programs).
- Through state departments of education, develop and promote policies about the new and changing roles of parents and families.
- Define common standards and eliminate local regulations to facilitate family involvement in decision-making.
- Create an independent Cabinet-level child/family advocacy position.
- Develop materials for parent/family involvement.

Starting Now

THE CALL TO ACTION

With a clear sense of the many roles for parent/families in the educational process and the steps various stakeholders could take to facilitate parent/family involvement, Summit participants reached consensus on their shared mission (see page 1) and adopted the following goals and strategies for carrying out that mission.

GOAL

Obtain or renew a strong commitment to parent/ family involvement through our respective organizational goals, policies and activities.

STRATEGIES

- Present Parent Involvement Summit mission statement to boards of our respective organizations for consideration and action.
- Use the mission statement to review, clarify, modify, strengthen organizational

policies and procedures relating to parent/family involvement.

- Obtain the commitment of organizations/associations/ businesses of Summit participants, through a formal approval process and/or reaffirmation of the mission.

GOAL

Generate visibility for the mission and facilitate implementation among Summit group participants' constituencies and the general public.

STRATEGIES

- Publicize results of the National Parent Involvement Summit through our organizations' publications.
- Disseminate National Parent Involvement Summit results nationwide to all of our branches and affiliates, along with information about how to implement the mission.
- Facilitate implementation of the Summit mission among constituents (state and local level) through kits, workshops, etc.
- Replicate Summit across country — train leaders, set up program.
- Develop how-to manual, model, or "Parent Involvement Summit kit" to help establish Summit in local communities.
- Devlop a national TV series on parent/family involvement.
- Develop a national ad campaign on parent/family involvement.
- Put Summit mission statement in full-page ad in major publication, paid for by participating organizations.
- Write and place articles in publications.

"Stress must be placed on collaboration..."

David L. Williams, Vice President,
Resources for School Improvement, Southwest Educational Development Laboratory

"A new system of collaboration is needed if all children are to succeed."

Don Davies, President, Institute for Responsive Educcation

- Encourage authors to submit articles on this topic to the broader public.
- Start a national recognition program for outstanding/model parent/family involvement programs (possibly funded by business partners).
- Ask the President for a proclamation regarding parent/family involvement.
- Position the PTA to become a catalyst to solicit support and action at state and local level.
- Create a collaborative insert—with input from Summit participants—for distribution through a national news magazine.
- Collectively develop a system to disseminate parent/family involvement information to the broadest possible audience.

GOAL

Seek legislation and the development of policies that include parent/family involvement.

STRATEGIES

- Mobilize legislation for parent/family involvement; make part of each organization's legislative program.
- Ask the President for a proclamation regarding parent/family involvement.
- Review existing elementary and secondary education legislation (state and federal) for reauthorization (within 60 days of Summit).
- Coordinate dissemination of model policies by school boards.

> *"There is nothing so powerful as an idea whose time has come..."*
>
> Pat Henry, President, The National PTA

- Encourage a joint resolution statement to Congress that a state would initiate and then encourage other states to follow.
- Summit organizations write joint resolution to Congress.

GOAL

Continue communication and collaboration among Summit participant groups and other key groups as identified.

STRATEGIES

- Develop clearinghouses of materials and include data collection about effective parent/family involvement practices.
- Within six months, each Summit participant organization will submit a synopsis to the PTA of what activities are being conducted.
- Contact with teacher education groups, such as AACTE and NCATE, to make parent/family involvement part of pre-service training.
- Continue networking among participating organizations.
- Develop core committee to act as liaison to other groups to maintain an ongoing commitment.

GOAL

Strengthen efforts on behalf of parent/family involvement to meet the needs of families of diverse backgrounds.

STRATEGY

- Incorporate this goal into all strategies emanating from the Summit.

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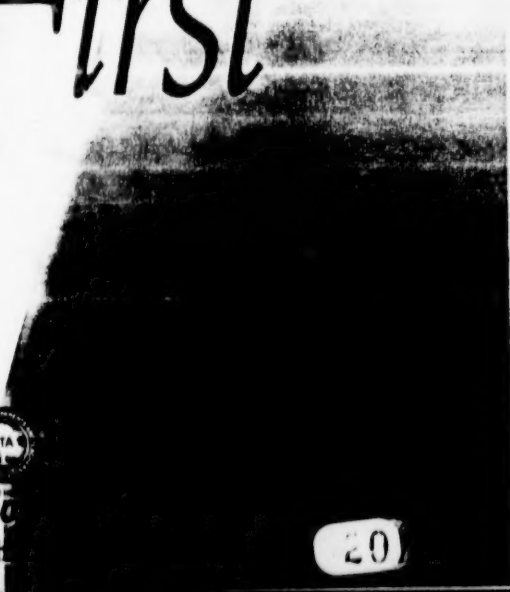

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